



MONTANA

Colorectal Cancer Screening Among Insured Montanans

Though 82% of Montanans have health insurance that pays for colorectal cancer (CRC) screening, screening rates in Montana remain lower than the national average of 65%.^{*} The Montana Cancer Control Program (MCCP) began educating insured adults aged ≥50 years about the importance of CRC screening, and letting them know that their health insurance plans cover the tests. The MCCP and the Montana Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition set a priority to increase CRC screening rates across the state.

The MCCP began communicating with small employer association plans, groups that have private benefit packages for their members through the state's largest insurers. These plans were receptive to educating their members about the screening tests covered under their benefits packages and, also, about other covered preventive health services, including breast and cervical cancer screening.

MCCP's first partner organization was Insure Montana, a small employer purchasing pool that covers about 5,000 people, including 1,900 who are aged ≥50 years. Insure Montana provided baseline CRC screening rates for these members, and will provide these data for 3 years for evaluation purposes.

Over the course of about 6 months, MCCP

- Included a statement about CRC screening on each insured person's monthly assistance check.
- Included an article about colorectal cancer in the Insure Montana newsletter sent to everyone participating in the program.
- Targeted Insure Montana members aged ≥50 years who were not up-to-date on either a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy (about 1,200 members) and sent them a postcard about CRC screening and health insurance coverage for the test.

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^{*}Montana Census and Economic Information Center. Montana Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey 2010. Available at <http://ceic.mt.gov/MtByNumb.asp>.

As MCCP developed its partnership with Insure Montana, they approached several other organizations. All of these organizations shared their members' CRC screening rates as part of the evaluation plan. Outreach activities included efforts such as postcard reminders with each organization's information on insurance coverage available for these services. This was also a great opportunity to educate members about changes to insurance coverage for preventive services that the Affordable Care Act[†] will bring. Through these campaigns, MCCP reached about 92,000 Montanans—almost 10% of the state's population.

In addition to working directly with insuring organizations and employers, MCCP has worked with It Starts With Me (ISWM) (<http://www.itstartswithme.com>), a company that provides wellness screening for many partners. MCCP and ISWM have developed a personalized message for participants aged ≥50 years who receive wellness screenings through their employers. The message is included in the screening results provided to participants and explains the importance of age-appropriate cancer screening and what insurance coverage is available.

This project has helped MCCP to build relationships with insurers and employers. They also are working with their partners on breast and cervical cancer screening messages, as well as integrated chronic disease prevention programs.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends colorectal cancer screening for men and women aged 50–75 using high-sensitivity fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy.



[†]Koh HK, Sebelius KG. Promoting Prevention through the Affordable Care Act. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2010;363:1293–1299. Available at <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1008560>.